



Comhairle Contae
Ros Comáin
Roscommon
County Council



Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2022 to 2027

DATED APRIL 2024

ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL

ÁRAS AN CHONTAE | ROSCOMMON

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1 Introduction / Purpose

This plan was prepared by the Roscommon Housing and Disability Steering Group in accordance with the current National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2022 - 2027 and the associated National Implementation Plan. It aligns with the Government's mental health policy "Sharing the Vision 2020 – 2030" and the report of the Working Group on Congregated settings 'Time to Move from Congregated Settings.' The HDSG recognise The National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2022 - 2027 provides for a Government approach to improving the lives of people with disabilities, creating the best possible opportunities to fulfil their potential including community living and The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities UNCRPD Article 19 the equal rights of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others.

The objective of the plan is to facilitate access, for disabled people, to the available range of housing supports and related services in a manner that promotes dignity, equality of opportunity, individual choice and independent living. The plan is evidence-based and its preparation included consultation with the relevant stakeholders including, housing providers, statutory agencies, service-user groups and disability organisations.

The plan will inform the provision of accommodation for disabled people over its lifetime and applies to all viable housing supply mechanisms. In the interest of clarity, the provision of social and private housing supports and services are addressed separately.

In preparing the Strategic Plan for Housing People with Disabilities 2022-2027, the HDSG considered the following Acts, policy documents and guidelines,

- The Disability Act 2005
- Assisted Decision Making Capacity 2015
- National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability, 2022 - 2027
- National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 Implementation Plan
- Housing for All – a new Housing Plan for Ireland to 2030
- Information and Communication Strategy (National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2022 – 2027)
- Action Plan for Disability Services 2024 – 2026, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, integration and Youth
- Sharing the Vision 2020 – 2030 - A Mental Health Policy for Everyone'
- Time to Move from Congregated Settings, HSE (2011)
- The National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2022 - 2027
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities UNCRPD (Ratified 2018)
- IWA Think Ahead, Think Housing
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse - National Policy and Procedures, HSE (2014)
- The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014)
- National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2021
- Irish Sign Language Act (2017 – Commencement Order 2020)

UN CRPD Articles 19, Living Independently and Being Included in the Community, and 28, Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection, outlines that disabled people have an equal right to access public housing schemes and grants, to live independently in the community, with choices equal to others. Under the UN CRPD, disabled people should be entitled to an adequate standard of living including housing, the opportunity to choose their place of residence on an equal basis with others and the opportunity to live independently in the community.

This strategy is informed by the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability which sets out its vision; To facilitate access for people with disabilities, to the appropriate range of housing and related support services, delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, which promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice and independent living.

The purpose of Roscommon County Council's strategic plan is to work towards a rights-based approach to housing, universal access and community inclusion for people with disabilities living in County Roscommon. Roscommon County Council will endeavour to achieve this within the mainstream housing environment and in line with their scheme of letting priorities.

2 Review of Previous Plan

The previous plan committed to allocating 10 percent of acquisitions and new builds to Disabled People that have qualified for social housing supports. In hindsight, this could be seen as a somewhat narrow commitment given that the largest and most consistent number of allocations involves the allocation of casual vacancies. In practice, the 10 percent commitment was exceeded by a significant amount across all housing supply streams over the life of the previous plan. Actual allocations will be assessed in more detail in Section 3 below and will form the basis of a broader commitment to disabled people.

Demand data is extremely useful and facilitates an evidence-based approach. However, a deeper assessment of the data may be required in order to accurately represent the true demand.

The previous plan expected that a significant percentage of social housing for disabled people would be provided via AHBs using CAS funding. In reality CAS activity was lower than anticipated and limited to certain disability categories. While it is not unusual for AHBs to align themselves with a particular disability category, this can limit the potential for supply of CAS-funded housing. This plan will continue to encourage CAS-funded projects but will also explore and include other delivery mechanisms.

3 Social Housing

This section will quantify the housing demand for persons with disabilities that are entitled to social housing supports. It will also quantify the housing supply mechanisms available to meet this demand.

3.1 Qualification of Social Housing Need

The four categories of housing need arising from disability referred to in this Strategy are:

- 1) Sensory Disability
- 2) Mental Health Disability
- 3) Intellectual Disability
- 4) Physical Disability

Currently Autism it is not recognised on the Disability and/or Medical Information Form (HMD - Form 1) as a category of its own – this will require addressing nationally. Roscommon County Council consider each application on its own merit and include Autism as a Sensory or Intellectual Disability depending on the specific needs of the individual.

HMD-Form 1 Disability and/or Medical Information Form

The information provided in the HMD-Form 1 Disability and/or Medical Information Form will be used by the Roscommon County Council to help assess individual applicants housing needs or that of a household member for Social Housing Supports. It will also assist Roscommon County Council to consider if the individual has any specific housing requirements arising from their disability or medical condition.

Roscommon County Council makes offers of accommodation in line with the order of priority as set out in their Allocation Scheme. Roscommon County Council will make reasonable efforts to ensure the offer is suitable to meet the applicant's housing need, including any specific accommodation requirements Roscommon County Council deem are necessary. Offers of accommodation are dependent on the availability of suitable properties.

Where applications are standard, decisions will be made within Roscommon County Council in consultation with applicant. Others may require discussion and recommendations from a sub-committee of the Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG) alongside consultation with applicant. See section on HDSG Subgroups. HDSG Subgroups allow for an interagency forum where 'Accommodation' and 'Supports' can be looked at collectively. It is a 'second layer' under the wider HDSG.

Housing need for Disabled People is known to include people from the following sources. Note, in some cases support services may also be required to facilitate independent living:

- a) LA housing waiting list non-transfer applicant: These are social housing applicants that are not currently renting social housing (LA or AHB housing) or private housing via HAP or RAS. This group mainly consists of people living in residential service settings or community settings and people sharing in private residence, typically the family home. Reliable data is available to quantify this group where they have applied for Social Housing.
- b) LA housing waiting list transfer applicant: This group are currently renting social housing (LA or AHB housing) or private housing via HAP or RAS but are also on the housing transfer list. Reliable data is available to quantify this group; however, the number of HAP transfers is difficult to estimate as most HAP tenants elect to remain on the transfer list regardless of their satisfaction with their HAP living arrangements.
- c) Living at home: This group consists of adult individuals with a disability who are living in private residence and may be supported by family or relatives or involuntary sharing with family. Reliable data is not available for this group but estimates could be determined with ongoing consultation with the various support service providers.

It is recognised that there is a degree of fluidity in demand figures at any given time as people move through the normal phases of life. It is also acknowledged that a disability can materialise at any stage in life and that the severity of a disability can change over time. This may result in a change in the accommodation needs and/or level of support required

3.2 Quantification of Social Housing Need

Per 3.1 a) and b) above, reliable data is available on social housing applicants that have identified as a disabled person. For comparison purposes, the following tables provide details relating to all social housing applicants and applicants that do not have a disability as well as applicants with a disability.

Table 3.2.i - Applications made by people with a disability (31 January 2024)

Disability Category	Applicants Incl. Transfers	HAP /RAS Transfers	Other Transfers	Total Transfers	Applicants Excl. Transfers
Intellectual	47	15	2	17	30
Mental Health	47	11	4	15	32
Physical	40	16	8	24	16
Sensory	4	2	0	2	2
Subtotals	138	44	14	58	80
Percentages	100%	32%	10%	42%	58%

Table 3.2.ii - Applications made by people without a disability (31 January 2024)

	Applicants Incl. Transfers	HAP / RAS Transfers	Other Transfers	Total Transfers	Applicants Excl. Transfers
Subtotals	630	374	28	402	228
Percentages	100%	59%	4%	64%	36%

Table 3.2.iii - All social housing applications (31 January 2024)

	Applicants Incl. Transfers	HAP /RAS Transfers	Other Transfers	Total Transfers	Applicants Excl. Transfers
Totals	768	418	42	460	308
Percentages	100%	54%	5.5%	60%	40%

Figures from Social Housing Need Assessment which is carried out annually are available on the housing agency website as follows: <https://www.housingagency.ie/publications>

The following observations can be made from social housing applicant data:

- Mental health and intellectual is the most common disability; this could be a significant factor when estimating the need for adaptive works, as many mental health and intellectual applicants generally do not require adaptive works.
- Sensory is the least common disability; numbers in this category are significantly lower than numbers in the other three categories.
- Applicants with a disability make up 26 percent of all applicants (excl. transfers); this would suggest that the allocation target for housing people with a disability, across all supply mechanisms, should be increased to 26 percent or more.
- 39 percent of applicants with a disability are HAP/RAS transfers; this compares with 59 percent for applicants without a disability.
- 10 percent of applicants with a disability are 'Other' transfers; this compares with 4 percent for applicants without a disability. Other transfers are usually transfers from existing social houses. This would indicate that the accommodation needs of people with a disability are more likely to change over time and a level of flexibility should be applied to facilitate this need.
- Of the 41 applicants with a disability currently living in HAP accommodation, 41 remained on the housing list as transfers. It is difficult to know what percentage of this group are not satisfied with their current private rented accommodation (this issue applies to all social housing applicants).

Table 3.2.iv - Current accommodation of applicants with a disability (31 January 2024)

Accommodation Type	Applicants	Transfer Applicants
Private rented – HAP	41	41
Private rented without RS	30	na
Living with parents/relatives	29	na
LA rental/AHB	20	14
Supported living	7	na
Private rented – RAS	3	3
Private rented with RS	1	na
Other	5	na
Emergency Accommodation	2	na
	138	58

Local Authorities, Approved Housing Bodies, the HSE and Service Providers work and collaborate efficiently improving access to housing for disabled people, providing community-based residential care for disabled people and working towards ending provision of residential care in residential service settings.

3.3 Review of Social Housing Supply

Social housing consists of owned/leased housing tenanted by local authorities or housing associations (also known as Approved Housing Bodies or AHBs). Depending on public finances, current housing policy and market conditions, local authorities and housing associations can secure new housing stock to varying degrees via a number of delivery mechanisms, including direct-build construction, turn-key construction, acquisition, and leasing. Rate of delivery in any given year is linked to location-specific demand and national housing delivery targets (currently Housing for All to 2030)

It is important to note that casual vacancies (existing social housing units that are surrendered, refurbished and reallocated) are likely to make up the majority of allocated units in any given year and that the availability of casual vacancies is likely to be more consistent than the availability of new stock. Casual vacancies allocated annually typically range between 50 and 70 units. Provision of new social housing stock is more variable; however, a sustainable supply of new stock is likely to be in the order of 50 units per year with an emphasis on appropriately-scaled, urban, in-fill development (supply targets are influenced by national housing policy).

For reasons outlined, provision and allocation of social housing to disabled people is reviewed in the context of all allocations of social housing, regardless of the supply mechanism. In this context, allocations of social housing to disabled people have consistently been in the order of 20 percent over the life of the previous strategy. As noted in Section 2 and based on applicant data in Section 3, it is appropriate that this allocation percentage should be in the order of 26 percent (at a minimum) rather than the 10 percent committed to in the previous strategy if proportional representation is to be achieved. A review of allocations over the life of the previous plan and the previous two years in particular, shows that proportional representation with regard to annual allocations can be achieved and is being achieved. The CSO Census of Population 2022 figures recorded a total of 1,109,557 people who stated they had a disability in April 2022, accounting for 22 per cent of the population. This represented an increase of 466,426 persons (72.5%) on the 2016 figure of 643,131. A new census of population will take place in 2027.

Allocation Description	2022	2023
All LA Allocations (includes leased properties)	68	82
All AHB Allocations	9	49
Combined SH Allocations	77	131
LA Allocations to PWD (includes leased properties)	31	28
AHB Allocations to PWD	0	17
Combined SH Allocations to PWD	31	45
Percentage Allocation of SH to PWD	40%	34%

Although not considered to be social housing, private rented housing support options such as RAS and HAP have been a viable accommodation option for many social housing applicants during the life of the previous strategy.

RAS is now used in a more selective manner that will favour those in difficult circumstances, including disabled people. The social housing needs of RAS tenants is deemed to have been met (unless a transfer has been approved) and therefore, it may be reasonable to include or account for the allocation of RAS-type leases to disabled people in the context of this strategy.

The HAP scheme on the other hand, has a more general application and may not be particularly suited to disabled people. The table below show that private rented tenancies allocated to disabled people has been proportionately lower than among social housing applicants in general.

The Strategy acknowledges that there are well known difficulties in the Rental Sector i.e non availability and landlords leaving the market together with high rents. In addition, Landlords may refuse tenants to make alterations and/or adaptations using the Local Authority Grant Scheme to suit their needs.

Allocation Description	2022	2023
All HAP Allocations	84	179
All RAS Allocations	10	17
Combined Private Rented Allocations	94	96
HAP & RAS Allocations to PWD	16	16
Percentage Allocation of Private Rented to PWD	17%	16.6%

3.4 Assessment of Future Social Housing Supply – Theme 1 & 2

The future supply of new social housing will rely on the same delivery mechanisms outlined in the previous section. Emphasis on specific delivery mechanisms may vary as market conditions and the political environment change.

Targets for new housing stock will be determined under the Housing for All to 2030 via direct build construction, turnkey construction, acquisitions and leasing and tenants in situ. Rate of delivery in any given year is linked to location-specific demand and national housing delivery targets. Supply will

vary from year to year; however, a sustainable supply of new stock is likely to be in the order of 50 units per year with an emphasis on appropriately-scaled, urban, in-fill development.

Housing for all targets will be provided to the Housing and Disability Steering Group annually. More importantly, details of proposed direct-build construction projects managed by Roscommon County Council and Housing Associations will be circulated to the steering group.

HDSG Sub Groups

HDSG Subgroups allow for an interagency forum where 'Accommodation' and 'Supports' can be looked at collectively. It is a 'second layer' under the wider HDSG.

As mental health is one of the largest categories of housing need arising from disability, it was the first subgroup to be set up.

The person-centred subgroup allows for coordinated progression of housing and support for people with enduring mental health issues who may otherwise struggle in navigating the systems to make an application for housing, obtain a property, access supports and maintain a tenancy. It is a partnership approach between Roscommon County Council - Housing and HSE Community Healthcare West Mental Health Services, to address the needs of people accessing both services, with their consent. The HSE Housing Coordinator works in partnership with the Administrative Officer within Housing, as a 'conduit' for the mental health service and the local authority.

The group allows for discussion of applicants individual needs and bridging the gap between the local authority and the HSE. It offers a communication pathway and for decisions to be made. More importantly, it allows for people with enduring mental health needs to progress to having their own homes and tenancies utilising a rights and community based approach.

The following subgroups will be established in 2024:

- Physical and Sensory subgroup
- Intellectual Disability subgroup

Roscommon County Council aim to:

- Identify the number of wheelchair/disability accessible properties in the pipeline.
- Share information with applicants who are in the offer zone.

The relevant disability representative on the subgroup should also provide details of specific housing needs to ensure these can be incorporated into the development at the design stage. Roscommon County Council accepts that this process requires the applicant to commit to a particular unit/development prior to design/planning approval, let alone construction; however, this is currently the only means by which a specially adapted unit can be funded. Accordingly, this process should only be considered where significant adaptations works are a necessity. Fortunately, significant adaptation works are generally not required in most cases and the normal allocation process can be followed.

Supply will be met by Roscommon County Council with direct funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage or by Housing Associations with funding assistance via the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) and the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS). Dependencies other than funding include availability of suitable lands, market activity, market opportunity, value for money and AHB engagement.

Emerging Need / Future Need

Roscommon county Council can only deal with Housing Applicants and households already identified to them through the Social Housing Support Application Process. However, it is accepted that there

will always be an emerging need in this area. Forecasts are based on past evidenced presentations and projections from those currently in receipt of care and under 18. The needs of individuals will vary and as a result the housing needs will vary.

Emerging needs: The updated Social Housing Support Application Form launched by the Department of Housing includes whether an applicant requires wheelchair accessible housing. This additional information will support Roscommon County Council in the future planning for wheelchair accessible units.

The Disability and/or Medical Information Form HMD - Form 1 will assist with identifying emerging needs for people with disabilities going forward, including applicants who have mobility issues, sensory needs and other support needs.

The Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG) welcome information from the HSE to identify any disabled persons resident in nursing homes in Roscommon County due to a lack of adequate personal and social care packages. Young people/adults with a disability leaving care should be highlighted to Roscommon County Council via the Tusla Aftercare Steering Committee.

Think Ahead, Think Housing is a campaign run by Irish Wheelchair Association to support and encourage people with disabilities to consider their current and emerging housing requirements and to apply to their local authority for housing which will assist Local Authorities to quantify the future Housing PWD needs.

4 Private Housing – Theme 3

Private housing refers to privately owner housing and generally includes all housing other than social housing (publically owned or leased housing).

4.1 Assessment of Private Housing Need

It is acknowledged that social housing makes up a relatively small percentage of the general housing stock. According to the 2022 Census, 22 percent of the County's population or 15,700 people have a disability. This would suggest that there is a significant need to facilitate Disabled People living in privately owned accommodation; however, a more detailed quantification of this need is available via the HNDA produced as part of the County Development Plan 2022 – 2028.

Opening Doors to your New Homes document outline options for people above the Social Housing threshold – first step towards your new home is available online at www.gov.ie/doorsopen

4.2 Assessment of Private Housing Supply

Provision of private housing is determined by market conditions and levels of private development activity. Private development in the County has been suppressed since the 2008 economic downturn and has never recovered. A small number of viable 'unfinished' developments were completed since the economic downturn; however, with the exception of 'one off' developments, no new private developments commenced in the County in the last decade and only a handful of planning applications for larger development (developments subject to Part V requirements) have been lodged in the same period. This reflects a national problem linked to increased construction costs, high rents, affordability and stringent mortgage requirements. Relevant indirect consequences include:

- Little or no provision of Part V social housing units
- Delayed impact and benefit from newer building regulations (energy efficiency most notably)
- Delayed impact and benefit from improved planning regulations
- Delayed impact and benefit from updated accessibility requirements (Universal Design)

5 Support Services

- To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communication technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.
- Living independently and being included in the community, ensures disabled people have equal rights in accessing housing and equal rights to accessing supports necessary to allow them to live independently within the community.

5.1 Provision of Support Services

The HSE has overall statutory responsibility for the funding and oversight of health care and personal social services and provides support services directly or via third party, non-statutory organisations. The HSE is also one of the main drivers of the deinstitutionalisation of residents from residential service settings and strongly supports their transition to independent living. It is also committed to the provision of long term supports, as required, to ensure a disabled person can lead a full and inclusive life within the community. Individual support services are identified in a person-centred plan. The plan also includes appropriate personal social services.

5.2 Personal Social Services (HSE)

The initial focus of these services is on the transition to independent living. This is especially relevant to people transitioning from residential settings. These services are usually provided via non-statutory organisations and may be funded by the HSE. Service providers assist individuals through the social housing application, assessment, allocation and tenant appointment processes and continue to support individuals as they transition to independent living. General tenancy support and sustainment services are also provided by local authority staff.

6 Communication and Access to Information – Theme 4

The Information and Communication Strategy promotes the use of accessible information and communication methods that are more inclusive of the specific requirements of disabled people. This Strategy enables key organisations to put practices in place that will assist them to become more accessible and inclusive, and foster an environment of ongoing learning and development. It outlines how good practice communication relating to housing and disability should be conducted at local and National level.

In order for this strategy to make an impact, it is critical that it is promoted in a manner that informs and encourages all relevant stakeholders to avail of the opportunities presented in the strategy. Preliminary results of a survey conducted in 2021 by DFI indicates that people with disabilities and/or their carers are largely unaware that their Local Authority has a Strategic Plan for Housing People with Disabilities and are not sufficiently informed that their Local Authority can provide social housing to those who qualify. The Housing and Disability Steering Group is the most important forum in this regard; however, promotion of the strategy to the wider Council, including the relevant SPC and the Planning Unit, and to the wider public via Roscommon County Council's website and other social platforms page is also important.

It is hoped that commitments given in this strategy will help focus the efforts of the Housing and Disability Steering Group and improve coordination between social housing providers and HSE disability group representatives.

A comprehensive and accessible public Communications Strategy with targeted actions to promote the Strategic Plan will be made available via:

- Roscommon County Council's website and links to websites of partner organisations
- Roscommon County Council facilities around the county to display information
- Roscommon County Council's social media pages with links to partner organisations to disseminate information, build general awareness and upload communiques about the strategy

In addition to the membership of the Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG), there are many organisations who have a key role to play in disseminating information such as: Tusla, HSE – Mental Health, Primary Care, Older Persons, Disability, Brothers of Charity, Youth Work Ireland, Jigsaw, Regional Co-ordinator for Traveller Health, Roscommon County PPN, Roscommon Rural Development, Independent Living Movement Ireland, Carers groups, RRETB, Roscommon Citizens Information Centre, County Sports Partnership, Roscommon County Age Friendly Alliance, Family Resource Centres.

The Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) will promote Roscommon County Council's Strategic Plan through its member organisations based in Roscommon County, Community and Voluntary stakeholders.

<https://www.disability-federation.ie/membership/county/roscommon/>

Roscommon County Council is committed to making the Strategic Plan for Housing People with Disabilities 2022-2027 available to individuals, families and carers as widely as possible.

Stakeholder Engagement and HDSG Functionality

The Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2022-2027 is guided by the continued involvement and oversight of the Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG). Over the course of the 2022-2027 period, the HDSG will work towards developing the individual/client/family representation on the group to ensure the lived experience of persons with a disability is understood, shared and represented.

The HSDG will continue to have representation from the relevant stakeholders. There is a need for further subgroups to be developed to focus on the various categories of housing need arising from disability.

There is currently well-established links with the physical disability, mental health and intellectual disability sector.

Roscommon County Council will ensure the HDSG is effective and functions to the best possible standards by:

- Reviewing the Terms of Reference on an ongoing basis to ensure there are minimal gaps in representation.
- Where there are gaps in representation on the HDSG, for example sensory disability (the deaf community and visually impaired and people with autism), a representative from one of DFI's member organisations based in County Roscommon may be identified and supported by DFI for inclusion on the HDSG and/or sub-group.
- Roscommon County Council will ensure elected Councillors, members of the Housing and Rural Water and ICT Strategic Policy Committees representatives are aware of the HDSG and its work.
- Building strong working relationships between Roscommon County Council, the HSE and Community partners.
- Information sharing about for e.g. Disability Awareness training to be shared via the HDSG to enable all stakeholders including Roscommon Council staff to avail of training (subject to approval).

7 Knowledge, Challenges and Opportunities – Theme 5

The following is a list of priorities that have been identified by stakeholders. This is not an exhaustive list. This strategy aims to offer some proposed solutions.

Property Register:	Roscommon County Council is one of the Pilot Counties with the role out of the National Assets Management system that will record the condition of its housing stock on an ongoing basis. This system should also record properties that have been adapted for people with a disability so that stock can be allocated more effectively and to those with exceptional housing needs. Notwithstanding the above, many applicants with a disability do not have exceptional housing needs; therefore, adapted properties should not be seen as the only units available to social housing applicants with a disability. The standard allocation process, which gives the applicant greater freedom of choice, should be promoted, where appropriate.
CAS	CAS is an excellent Housing Association funding mechanism for provision of housing for social housing applicants with a disability and other vulnerable groups. The Housing and Disability Steering Group should encourage and facilitate these Housing Associations to undertake new projects. In addition, larger Housing Associations, with no link to any particular disability group, should be encouraged to avail of CAS funding.
Universal Design:	Evidence suggest that significant adaptation works are not required to meet the housing needs of many social housing applicants with a disability and that adopting the principles of Universal Design would cater for the needs of most. Roscommon County Council is strongly in favour of Universal Design as it improves the resilience and robustness of the housing stock for all tenants. Roscommon County Council will continue to seek resources from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to deliver the required level of universal design. This will ensure longterm investment in the future proofing of the county's housing stock. It should be noted however, that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, remains as the sanctioning authority in respect of the adopted design standards, funding and project approvals. Higher levels of design for disability (including higher levels of universal design) can be sanctioned but such applications must be accompanied by supporting evidence and information in the form of clinical assessment/recommendation (for e.g. Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and related clinical fields) in respect of the particular circumstances of an identified prospective tenant. Roscommon County Council is committed as far as possible to follow best practice guidelines including best international practices. At design stage, consideration is given to applicants with a disability which impacts on their housing requirements. AHB's will promote Universal Design within their Turnkey Developments on initial approach to the developers.
Accessibility	Roscommon County Council has developed and will continue to provide wheelchair accessible/liveable housing, where the need arises subject to individual requirements and funding from Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage. Alongside this is a need for additional equipment

including supports such as a PA or a carers bedroom as provided by relevant stakeholders and other supporting organisations.

Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology for housing design is recommended to support independent living and in developing efficiencies in the requirements for personal assistants/support staff and informal supports. The use of home/smart technology is encouraged and will be incorporated where feasible, subject to departmental approval.

Pathways / Communication

The Housing Coordinator post has been established in HSE Mental Health. The HDSG recommends that this post should be replicated by the Physical, Sensory and Intellectual Disability Sector as it has proven to be a valuable model in supporting people linked to Mental Health services acquiring housing and liaising with Roscommon County Council. The National Strategy recommends that there is a person nominated by each CHO in Mental Health and in Disability Services to work closely with a representative from the local authority Housing Department (Action 2.1.1) and that the parties will report to the HDSG meetings on the progress made as a result of this close working relationship.

Representation of Applicants with a Disability

The HDSG recommend the inclusion of a lived experience rep from each category of disability on the HDSG (if possible). The Lived Experience representative and service provider representative from each category of need can work in partnership. There would be an expectation that the lived experience representative has an interest / knowledge base in housing issues and is part of a broad consultative fora.

Clients who have been residing in an institutional or acute setting

An 'institutional residential setting' is defined as 'any place in which people do not have, or are not allowed to exercise control over their lives and day to day decisions. An institution is not defined merely by its size. This definition helps to illustrate that the experience of institutionalisation is not related simply to location or size of the property, but rather to life conditions and the degree to which a resident has real and substantial control over their living arrangements. Under category of need, the length of time an individual with a disability has been residing in an institutional, acute or residential service setting prior to making their housing application may be considered. This will be determined on a case by case basis. Historically, residents in such settings may not have been aware, encouraged or supported to apply for social housing as they are currently. This was a restriction of their rights and resulted in a delayed application for social housing.

Co-sharing

Currently, persons allocated a co-sharing tenancy with Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) or a RAS tenancy are considered to have their long-term housing needs met and are removed from the housing waiting list. Exceptions can be considered on a case by case basis for individuals in co-sharing arrangements to remain on the social housing waiting list provided

they apply and are approved for a transfer. Individuals who are co-sharing in non-relative, non-partner arrangements (who are linked to a disability service provider / HSE / service setting) who are sharing a tenancy and who would prefer to be considered for a single unit of accommodation in future will be considered which relates to Action 6.2.1 & 6.2.4 of the National Strategy.

Supports & Social Care

It is acknowledged by the HDSG that there are limited resources available to disability service providers from the HSE and Dept. of Health to enable services to provide the staffing and supports required to facilitate some clients with disabilities to avail of supported or independent living in the community. There is an ongoing gap between the housing need/provision and the support/care need in some cases, specifically regarding individuals who require a regular support worker input to provide support with activities of daily living (ADLs). ADLs can include personal care, dressing, transferring/ambulating, and support with meals. This can also include support to access the community safely, for e.g. accessing public transport, support with managing safeguarding issues, managing finances, paying bills, doing shopping etc. Ongoing and regular communication via the HDSG and relevant subgroups will assist with the communication aspect of these cases. Ongoing advocacy is required on a case by case basis by the disability service providers to the HSE for resources. Legislation and policy regarding individualised funding for supports for service users should also be progressed at a national level.

Other Challenges to note

- Lack of supply of appropriate, affordable housing in the private sector
- Severe pressure on the private rental market
- Construction cost inflation and labour availability
- Rent Allowance/HAP tenants' requiring adaptations/aids/appliances are often not accepted by landlords in private rented accommodation.
- Challenges within leasing schemes delivering social housing solutions.
- Families are often unable to finance the excess cost required to complete home adaptation despite the funding available via the Housing Adaptation Grant scheme.

Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion is about people with disabilities being supported to have a normal life in their community like everybody else and to access the same services – we don't 'spend time in the community', we live in the community. We go to shops, cafes, pubs, gyms, concerts, football matches, choirs, hobbies, socialise, meet friends, family, etc. The Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2022-2027 is underpinned by the ethos of Social Inclusion and the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025. Limited accessible public transport options can result in housing in more rural areas being unsuitable for persons with disabilities – much of the demand for social housing is concentrated in the larger towns of County Roscommon as a result – Roscommon Town, Castlerea and Boyle.

Training

It is acknowledged areas where cross-agency training is necessary such as the introduction and application of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015, ongoing training on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Public Sector Duty. Where appropriate and practical, training will be provided by disabled people.

8 Key Points, Targets and Deliverables

8.1 Key points

- Provision and allocation of social housing to Disabled people is reviewed in the context of all allocations of social housing, regardless of the supply mechanism. In this context, allocations of social housing to Disabled people have consistently been in the order of 20 percent over the life of the previous strategy.
- RAS is now used in a more selective manner that will favour those in difficult circumstances it may be reasonable to include or account for the allocation of RAS-type leases to disabled people.
- In the 2022 Census, 22 percent of the County's population or 15,700 people have a disability, this would suggest that there is a significant need to facilitate people with a disability living in privately owned accommodation and this is likely to increase in the 2027 census figures.
- Disabled Persons Grants are available to adapt existing Council houses. 30 units were adapted in 2022 and 2023 at an average grant value of €21,201 per grant. This level of funding is indicative of future funding (€318,015 per annum).
- Housing Grants for People with a Disability are available to adapt private houses. 86 units were adapted in 2022 and 2023 at an average grant value of €21,180 per grant. This level of funding is indicative of future funding (€ 910,730 per annum).

8.2 Targets

- Allocation percentage should be in the order of 26 percent (at a minimum) rather than the 10 percent committed to in the previous strategy if proportional representation is to be achieved.
- Housing for all targets will be provided to the Housing and Disability Steering Group annually.
- Details of proposed direct-build construction projects managed by Roscommon County Council and Housing Associations will be circulated to the steering group in advance with a view to identifying social housing applicants with a disability and additional housing needs (significant adaptive works). The relevant disability representative on the steering group should also provide details of specific housing needs to ensure these can be incorporated into the development at the design stage. Roscommon County Council accepts that this process requires the applicant to commit to a particular unit/development prior to design/planning approval. Accordingly, this process should only be considered where significant adaptations works are a necessity.

8.3 Deliverables

Action 1.4.4 states that all stakeholders must assist to inform the local strategic planning for the changing community support needs of disabled people in the community, and those who are living in the family home as their carers get older. The lead on this action is the HDSGs and other partners include all stakeholders. The deadline is 2023 Q3. The outcome of this action will be the Local Strategic Plan gets reviewed annually.

Action 2.3.3. consists of nine sub-actions of which the HDSGs are lead on for eight and other partners are all HDSG members. The Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs) have been identified in both Housing for All and the new NHSDP as key to the implementation of the strategy at local level.

As a result, the following will be actioned:

- (a): I. HDSGs will review their Terms of Reference and their frequency of meetings. Each HDSG reviews their terms of reference and submits to the HA and National Implementation Steering Group by Q4 2023.
- (b): II. HDSGs will review their membership and ensure there is representation from Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) on each group. Membership should be reviewed annually to ensure that there is fair representation. There should be an increase in the DPO membership in all HDSGs by Q4 2023.
- (c) III. HDSGs will report quarterly on their delivery, allocations, pipeline delivery and support packages. This action is underway and ongoing throughout the lifetime of the strategy. The KPI is that each HDSG coordinates with members and submits their quarterly returns to the HA and National Implementation Steering Group.
- (d) IV. HDSGs will examine how members represent their sector and how the group supports members to report back to their sector. The sector forums are established where representative report to their sector by Q3 2023.
- (e) V. Establish subgroups of the HDSGs to deal with specific issues or groups, as appropriate. This action is underway and ongoing. The KPI is that subgroups are established to deal with specific issues.
- (f) VI. All stakeholders communicate on pipeline delivery to allow for effective planning including gains from the close working relationships. This action is underway and ongoing. The deliverable is that a stakeholder communication on pipeline delivery in place.
- (g) VII. Ensure that delivery is provided in a coordinated way without competition for existing supply. This action is underway and ongoing. The KPI is that measures in place to reduce risk of competition.
- (i) IX. HDSGs to encourage and facilitate smaller specialised Housing Associations to undertake new projects. This action is underway and ongoing. The KPI for this is that HDSGs have reached out to smaller specialised AHBs in their area.

Action 4.5.5 is to conduct a mapping exercise of county wide services under housing, health, and community for each county. The lead are the HDSGs, and the other partners will be all stakeholders. The mapping exercise will be completed, and a report produced by Q2 2024.

Action 5.1.5 states that the HDSGs organise “shared learning” days in their local authority where representatives from LA’s and disability services share learning with members. The lead is the HDSGs, and other partners are all stakeholders. The KPI is that the timetable prepared and “shared learning” days held.

9 Monitoring and Reporting

Under action 1.1.3 of the NHSDP Implementation Plan Housing and Disability Steering Groups will report quarterly on the implementation of their Local Strategic Plans regarding housing for disabled people to the Chief Executive and the Strategic Policy Committee. This is underway and ongoing at the time of writing this plan.

Under action 2.3.3 (c) This HDSG will report quarterly on delivery, allocations, pipeline delivery and support packages.

The steering group will also report centrally to The Housing Agency against its progress on actions set out in the NHSDP Implementation Plan that fall due or are underway and ongoing. The group will, as a collective, agree an update against each action.

This plan will be reviewed at the end of the first quarter of each year in order to report on the deliverable for the previous year and to examine the appropriateness of the information and proposed outputs for the coming year.

The document will also be reviewed and updated, as required, on foot of the publication of the National Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2022 – 2027.

Allocations of social housing to social housing applicants with a disability will be recorded by Roscommon County Council and compared with all allocations made in a given year to ensure targets and proportional representation are being achieved. Other required reports such as the annual Implementation Return and housing-related NOAC (National Oversight and Audit Commission) return will also be available. All reports will be made available to the Housing and Disability Steering Group.